



—Photo by The Times-Picayune.
THOMAS E. BECKHAM
Appears before grand jury.

JURY QUESTIONS PROBE WITNESS

Beckham Testifies for
About Six Hours

Questioning of an Omaha, Neb., singing minister in District Attorney Jim Garrison's Kennedy death probe continued late into the afternoon Thursday before the Orleans Parish Grand Jury.

At one point in the afternoon session, Thomas Edward Beckham faced a team of DA's assistants and Garrison himself. Garrison entered the jury room with assistants James L. Alcock, Richard V. Burnes, Andrew J. Sciambra and Numa Bertel, but left the Criminal Courts Building shortly after.

Beckham left the grand jury room at about 6:20 p. m. after being questioned for a total of some six hours.

Before going before the jury in a morning session Thursday, Beckham unsuccessfully sought permission to have an attorney accompany him.

MOTION IS FILED

Acting as his own attorney, Beckham filed a motion with Judge Matthew S. Braniff seeking to prevent his appearance on the grounds that his civil rights would be violated.

Claiming he knows nothing about the Kennedy assassina-

tion, he said he feared he was being framed by Garrison and Jack Martin, a private investigator.

Judge Braniff denied the motion, saying Beckham had nothing to fear if he told the truth. "But it'll be behind closed doors," Beckham said.

However, Judge Braniff ordered him to appear. Garrison made a brief appearance before the jury before Beckham entered at 10:45 a. m.

SUBPENA FOR BECKHAM

Garrison's subpoena for Beckham said that the singer was an associate of the late David W. Ferrie, a prominent figure in Garrison's allegations of a conspiracy to kill President John F. Kennedy in Dallas in 1963.

The subpoena identified Beckham and Ferrie as ordained priests of the "Old Orthodox Catholic Church of North

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GRAND JURY

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America." It also alleged that Beckham was in Dallas in November of 1963.

After being ordered to New Orleans for a Feb. 1 appearance, Beckham obtained a postponement until Thursday on the grounds that he needed time to confer with his attorney, newly-elected state Rep. Edward H. Booker.

WITHOUT ATTORNEY

However, he entered Judge Braniff's court room Thursday without an attorney, but he was accompanied by A. Roswell Thompson, who has often been a candidate for New Orleans mayor and other offices.

Beckham said he drew up his motion in a restaurant after conferring with an attorney. It was labeled a "request for restraining order on personal appearance without counsel."

Beckham indicated he would cite the Fifth Amendment if he were asked questions he felt would incriminate him.

Alcock indicated that Beckham would not be called before the Grand Jury again.